



Save Open Space ✧ P. O. Box 1284 ✧ Agoura, CA 91376

SOS Preserving the Santa Monica Mountains for 25 Years!



Deer in Chesebro Meadow / Photo by Larry Brown

Preserving Santa Monica Mountains for 25 years!

For 25 years, Save Open Space (SOS) has been preserving open space and protecting our wildlife. SOS also has as its mission: holding governments accountable to environmental laws.

We need your financial support to continue to protect the Santa Monica Mountains zone, our mountain cities, and our quality of life. The SOS Board is all volunteers, and we have no paid staff. All our funds are spent achieving our goals and on issues which violate the well thought out plans for your individual areas. Please continue your financial support to help with the various expenses needed to accomplish our goals.

—Mary Wiesbrock, Chair SOS

SOS Board Members

Bob Coutts, Fran Coutts, Steve Hess,
Cynthia Maxwell, Brittany Stephens,
Mary Wiesbrock, Jeremy Wolf

go to www.saveopenspace.com to see
newsletter in color and follow links

Chesebro Meadow

SOS played a major role in the land use battles which preserved Palo Comado (Jordan Ranch), Ahmanson and Gillette Ranches. Chesebro Meadow is the last piece left of the Bob Hope/Potomac/Jordan Ranch saga. This unique Meadow is home to multitude of wildlife and serves as valuable grasslands for raptors.

Chesebro Meadow is now a critical part of the Liberty Canyon wildlife Corridor, the sole functioning wildlife corridor and habitat serving our national park. The City of Agoura Hills' Open Space Preservation Action Plan ranks the Chesebro Meadow property as highest priority to save as open space: "Protection of the integrity and preservation of this area is a high priority for the community."

SOS has written an initial application to apply for a state parkland agency to purchase all Chesebro Meadow's 71 acres at fair market value with the mountain lion bond funds. The Chesebro Meadow fits the 1990 Prop 117 criteria in four different sections of this parkland bond act. We can easily make this a "Win" for City of Agoura Hills and the developer with the Chesebro Meadow Liberty Canyon Wildlife Corridor becoming open space parkland. To help us, email SaveChesebroMeadow@gmail.com to join the Coalition to Save Chesebro Meadow Wildlife Corridor.



Rare Kite in Chesebro Meadow / Photo by Larry Brown

SOS Working for You in 2013



Courtesy, Cornell resident

Winter

Amgen Bike Tour: SOS pushed for the return of the Amgen Tour of California to our mountain park: meeting with then Mayor Claudia Bill-de-la Peña, speaking at the Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments, and sending a letter to the Thousand Oaks City Council on the benefits of the world's second biggest bike race for showcasing our mountains and helping the local economy. Request that the Amgen Tour of California return annually by emailing Claudia at claudia4slowgrowth@roadrunner.com and thank her for her efforts in the return of the Bike Race to our mountains. Emailing other Thousand Oaks Council members will also be helpful!

Spring

Sumac School/Las Virgenes Unified School District (LVUSD): SOS pursued an environmental review of the new Mariposa School being crowded onto the existing Sumac School campus. Instead of doing an environmental document, LVUSD choose to piece-meal and exempt this whole new school. The environmental process would have required the impacts to be mitigated (lessened). These impacts include: aesthetics as now there are many more than

2013 News Briefs

- **Media Creek Restoration:** SOS sent in a support letter to the City of Agoura Hills as our goal in the city's General Plan is for naturalization of all the city's creeks.
- **Santa Susanna Knolls Proposed Urban Development:** SOS requested that this project be denied as allowing urban development in this rural Simi area. The Ventura County Supervisors voted to deny this incompatible project and listened to the residents and their CEQA lawyer Alyse Lazar.
- **Pesticide regulation:** SOS's letter supported the new state restrictions on rodenticide ingredients. Studies show that these anticoagulants contribute to the deaths of our pets and wildlife.

10 crowded trailers; and inadequate parking for staff and volunteers as cars are now parked all day long up and down neighborhood streets; safety from drop-offs on major neighborhood streets instead of in the Sumac circle, and the additional impact of more cars on Kanan Road's gridlock as more than one-third of Mariposa's student are out of district.

With environmental review, an alternative site for Mariposa would have been considered thus allowing Mariposa to have its own separate campus. There is excess school property on Las Virgenes Road. This beautiful school site on Las Virgenes Road has enough room. This excess school site is now being rented out to a private school.

Both schools offer unique educational opportunities. Sumac offers an "LSTEM" (Language, Science, Tech, Engineering, and Math) premier program to better prepare students for future jobs (Ventura County Star business section: <http://www.kansas.com/2014/07/06/3541304/science-tech-math-jobs-take-longer.html>). In the future, Sumac should be growing, and LVUSD should be advertising Sumac's unique programs. Mariposa offers an alternative learning philosophy to those children who excel in a Montessori/Waldorf classroom. Mariposa deserves its own campus not crowded trailers.

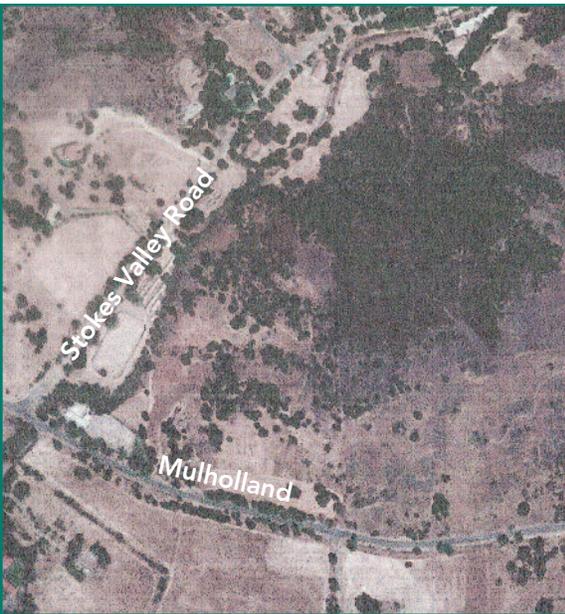


<http://www.r7media.com//smmbook.html>

Summer

Malibu Lakeside Open Space: SOS participated in many meetings and a final hearing on the 4 acres of open space in the Malibu Lakeside community. Malibu Lakeside Community Association (MLCA) is planning to raise funds to purchase this 4 acres which had been set aside in the 1920s as the recreational lot for their subdivision. MLCA is working with Mountains Restoration Trust in setting up this funding project. Also, MLCA is looking into forming a Park District to help raise funds for this spectacular open space and riparian ecosystem. The boy scouts have joined forces with MLCA to get the historic fountain working, building benches and redoing the bus stop.

Save Rural Stokes Valley!



The entrance property to Stokes Valley (31 acres -north of Gillette Ranch and Mulholland, and east of Stokes Road) is high priority fee acquisition on the Land Protection Plan of our National Park. It is considered future parkland property because it is within the park boundaries and contains two sensitive ecosystems: the lush riparian Stokes Creek and significant oak woodland.

If located 100 feet from riparian Stokes Creek, the existing equestrian facility there would be an acceptable use since the existing rural land use allows equestrian facilities. The remainder of the property should be preserved as open space thus protecting the stream ecosystem and the magnificent oak woodland.

Unfortunately, Los Angeles County is allowing this 31 acre property much more value with a change to Commercial Recreation-Limited land use and Resort Recreational zoning. The new major zone change principal use is for campgrounds but it also allows for accessory live entertainment in a bar or restaurant having an occupant load of up to 200 people and a recreational trailer park. These uses are growth inducing and not compatible with rural Stokes Valley.

This higher value commercial land use could easily replace a low value equestrian use for this property.

Our hope is that this property is added to our national park's priority list for acquisition by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This fund is an oil company mitigation fund to acquire parkland nation-wide. The sensitive Stokes Valley property should be purchased as open space parkland, as was intended in the 1978 Land Protection Plan for our National Park.

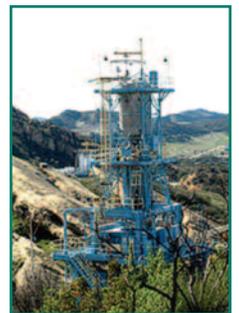
If this large property becomes national parkland, the equestrian use could continue as long as there is a 100 foot buffer from Stokes stream. The 100 stream foot buffer has been required of all large properties within the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone to protect water quality in our national park's Malibu Creek Watershed and our seashore.

2014 Updates

- **EDGE development:** This 5 mansion project proposal will mar the scenic Malibu view shed of our National Park. Do a web search for "Evans: Over the Edge" to bring up our Facebook page. Help save this magnificent view shed by a "like."
- **Newhall Ranch:** SOS turned in a Friend of the Court paper on this project. The Supreme Court of California has decided to review an appeal court's decision to allow this massive new city without proper environmental review. This 20,000 home project will have significant environmental impacts including to Ventura County's the Santa Clara River. Thanks go to CEQA attorney Frank Angel.
- **Mansdorf Property-**SOS continues to lend support to the annual request from our Congress people for the oil company funds (LWCF) to purchase this magnificent rugged coastal property.
- **Santa Monica Mountain National Recreational Area name change to Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore National Park:** SOS is continuing to add supporting organizations to this effort to better describe our national park as was envisioned by its founders.

Save the Rocket Test Stands!

Save the Rocketdyne Test Stands at the Santa Susanna Field Laboratory (SSFL)! Three of the Rocket Test Stands, a valuable piece of American history, now remain. These stands helped test the rockets which were used in America's space exploration and helped to take America to the moon. Unfortunately, the new NASA agreement allows NASA to take down all of these historic test stands.



SSFL currently serves as critical wildlife habitat and corridor for our national park. Future plans for SSFL, 2800 acres, are that it becomes parkland. Cleanup has been going on there for some 20 years. Our position is that SSFL needs to be cleaned up to a level which protects public health and takes into account its ultimate use as recreational parkland. Strict clean up to background level (site's soil before industrial activities) is not necessary to protect public health because the future site users will be recreational users: hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, and joggers. No one will be living on the site.

The NASA environmental document disclosed that cleaning up to background will cause significant environmental impacts to the cultural, biological, and earth resources. NASA needs to comply with environmental law by including an analysis of alternative cleanup levels in an addendum to their environmental document. The NASA agreement can and should be modified to mitigate these significant impacts.

Ahmanson Ranch 10-Year Anniversary Celebration, November 17, 2013



JOE BEHAR TRAIL

The preservation of Ahmanson Ranch is a victory for the grassroots. One of the lessons learned in this triumph is that each person who becomes active makes a difference. Thanks go to all who worked in the 15 year struggle to save Ahmanson Ranch now Las Virgenes Open Space Preserve. At this Ahmanson Ranch anniversary celebration, we honored Joe Behar with a trail in his name.

After years of struggling to save the ranch and 5 different court battles, many of us were exhausted. Joe showed up with his Big Yellow Sign on wheels that could be seen from a mile away, a megaphone that attracted and drew a crowd, and energy to spare. When it wasn't being used to spread the message about the destructive urban development planned for this magnificent open space, this "billboard on wheels" was so large it had to be stored on Jim and Sidney Wrigley's rural property. Joe brought new passion to the battle to save the ranch. Joe quickly became a leader in the grassroots effort to preserve Ahmanson Ranch when he founded the West Valley Coalition. It was a flyer from the West Valley Coalition, mailed to an HBO executive who lived in the impacted area, that was responsible for the formation of the star studded organization, Rally for the Ranch. Joe was persistent, dedicated, noisy and most important inspiring! Without Joe's enthusiastic presence pushing at just the right moment, Ahmanson Ranch would have been 3000 homes plus!

Come and enjoy the trail dedicated to honor Joe Behar. Take the 101 to Valley Circle Blvd. exit. Go north on Valley Circle, and then left on Victory Blvd, to the end. Park at Victory trail-head, read the Kiosk for the ranch's history and take the trail to the left up to Lasky Mesa.

Photos from top to bottom, left to right:

What the fight to save Ahmanson Ranch was all about!; Joe Behar shows how he got the nickname, "Bullhorn Guy," lobbying for parkland; Former Governor Gray Davis touring display with Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks; Senator Fran Pavley chatting with Rob Reiner; Joe Behar, honored at celebration with a trail named in his honor, talking with Eve and Paul Wagner; Mary Wiesbrock with Ginger Pollock, who created History Panels in background; Janna Orkney helping set up a display

All photos by Janna Orkney, editor,
www.ConejoPost.com